

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 2 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT

GREAT AMWELL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Great Amwell

**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To enable Members to consider the Great Amwell Conservation Area Appraisal following public consultation.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> that:</b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>the responses to the public consultation be noted and the Officer responses and proposed changes to the Great Amwell Conservation Area Appraisal be supported;</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development Management and Council Support, to make any further minor and consequential changes to the Appraisal which may be necessary; and</b>
<b>(C)</b>	<b>the Great Amwell Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.</b>

1.0 Background.

1.1 East Herts has a rich environmental heritage which includes 42 Conservation Areas. The East Herts Local Plan commits

the Council to review its Conservation Areas, a requirement which is also set out in national legislation.

- 1.2 The review of Great Amwell Conservation Area is one of a series of reviews being undertaken and this is the latest one for consideration.
- 1.3 Each document identifies the special character of the respective Conservation Area together with the elements that should be retained or enhanced and those which detract from the identified character. Existing boundaries are reviewed and, where appropriate, practical enhancement proposals are suggested.
- 1.4 Once Members have considered each Appraisal, and the document has been adopted by the Council, it becomes a 'material consideration' in the process of determining planning applications.

## 2.0 The Great Amwell Conservation Area Appraisal

- 2.1 The Great Amwell Conservation Area was designated in 1988. The Conservation Area Appraisal was completed in 2015 and the Draft Appraisal went through a period of public consultation from 14 October until 25 November 2015, with a public meeting held on 14 October 2015 which about 30 persons attended. The headline issues are set out in the following paragraphs:
- 2.2 *General content of draft Appraisal:* The draft Appraisal proposed revisions to the Conservation Area boundary to include land at the southern end of Cautherly Lane, particularly the curtilage of Pepper Hill House and minor adjustments elsewhere. The latter minor adjustments elsewhere more accurately reflect existing boundaries. The document identifies the key environmental features and the manner in which they can be controlled. In relation to Great Amwell the most relevant ones are: Listed Buildings including structures in their curtilages; non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection; other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection and important open land and spaces.

- 2.3 *Listed buildings and structures in their curtilages:* These are protected by legislation and have been identified in the Appraisal.
- 2.4 *Non listed buildings of quality worthy of protection:* Several have been identified that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and these should be retained through the planning process. Some non-listed residential buildings have good quality architectural features of high quality whose formal protection could be achieved through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction which is a course of action the Council has yet to consider.
- 2.5 *Other unlisted distinctive features worthy of protection:* A number have been identified and include walls and railings which are important to the character of Great Amwell, particularly those railings alongside the New River that should be retained.
- 2.6 *Important open land and spaces:* The Appraisal has identified a number of such important open spaces that materially contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area that should be protected through the planning process.
- 2.7 *Enhancement proposals to deal with detracting elements:* Some have been identified and include railings and boundary walls in need of repair, damaged signage and an untidy site. It is accepted that such improvements will often only be carried out with the co-operation of owners and other local bodies and organisations. However the District Council may have a role to play in some instances, for example by offering technical advice; by determining applications and where appropriate offering grant assistance.

### **3.0 Consultation Feedback**

- 3.1 Several responses were received, including from the Parish Council and from local residents including an objection from the owners of Pepper Hill House concerning the inclusion of their property within the Conservation Area. No response was received from the Great Amwell Society although it was

represented at the public meeting.

- 3.2 A summary of comments received through the consultation process and officer responses are set out in the table included as **Essential Reference Paper B**.
- 3.3 **Essential Reference Paper C** is a copy of the Great Amwell Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as it appeared at the consultation draft stage with track changes to text and alterations to plans that incorporate the necessary changes made in response to consultation comments. Further minor changes will be incorporated reflecting the status of the final document once Members have considered it for adoption.
- 3.4 **Conclusion.** In summary, following a site visit with the Council's Arboricultural Officer and for reasons set out in **Essential Reference Paper B**, it is no longer considered appropriate to extend the Conservation Area along Cautherly Lane as first proposed in the draft document. Subject to this amendment which also includes a further very minor adjustment to the boundary at Cautherly Lane, it is recommended that the Great Amwell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted and be used in the process of determining planning applications.

#### 4.0 Implications/Consultations

- 4.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper A**.

#### Background Papers

None

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